



State of Louisiana
Department of Environmental Quality



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ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS

DEQ KICKS OFF DRINKING WATER PROTECTION CAMPAIGN Pilot Program To Begin In Avoyelles Parish

(Baton Rouge) - The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ) Drinking Water Protection Team will be visiting local public and private schools in Avoyelles parish beginning this week through April 30, 2003. The objective of the visits is to increase awareness regarding the importance of protecting drinking water sources and the steps each person can take to protect the integrity of their water. The DEQ Team will make environmental presentations to students during this initial phase of the Drinking Water Protection campaign.

The Drinking Water Protection campaign is a pilot program that will kickoff in Avoyelles parish with a Community Meeting. The event will be held Thursday, May 1, 2003 at 6:30pm at the Marksville Fire Station. The campaign seeks to involve private citizens, community groups, water systems, businesses and industry in Avoyelles parish. The Team expects the initiative to expand to other parishes in Louisiana.

"We would like this meeting to be a family affair and we encourage every Avoyelles parish resident to join this effort to protect our environment. This is the kind of public education campaign that gives citizens control over the fate of their natural resources," stated Vince Sagnibene, Administrator of DEQ's Environmental Evaluation Division. "DEQ is encouraging all residents in the Avoyelles parish and surrounding areas to take an active role in ensuring a clean drinking water for the future. Participation is the key," he added.

(more)

The Drinking Water Protection Program is a voluntary program designed to assist communities in protecting their drinking water sources. It is an extension of the Louisiana Wellhead Protection Program, which DEQ has run for well over a decade. The Wellhead Protection Program has received numerous awards and certificates of recognition from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for excellence and efficiency. The May 1st kick-off meeting will address the goals and objectives of the Drinking Water Protection Program and issues pertaining to Avoyelles parish. Because clean water is essential for good health, the Drinking Water Protection Team will share protection and conservation tips that parish residents can use in their homes that make economic sense.

The Drinking Water Team and the DEQ Communications Section are joining forces to develop a comprehensive campaign aimed at increasing public awareness and elevating the level of participation in the effort to protect drinking water sources. The campaign will utilize a combination of communication vehicles and venues to deliver its message, which is to “Protect Drinking Water One Drop At A Time.” The Team is seeking volunteers to serve on committees to work with the community in creating a sustainable drinking water program.

For more information you may contact the DEQ Drinking Water Protection Team members Don Haydel or Micaela Marchand at 225-765-0578 and visit the DEQ web page at <http://www.deq.state.la.us/evaluation/aepe>.